GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	14th July 2020
School or Executive Group Area:	Digital Steering Group
Department:	Cross GSA proposal
Lead member of staff: **e-mail:**	Paul Chapman & Mark Charters p.chapman@gsa.ac.uk / m.charters@gsa.ac.uk
Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:	Move to Hybrid Learning

Please indicate if this is:	New:	X
	Existing/Reviewed:	☐

1. Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

This EIA considers GSA's move to a hybrid model of learning, teaching and assessment for Academic Session 2020-21 in response to the COVID 19 crisis. Hybrid learning and teaching is defined as a combination of remote online learning, coupled with limited face to face learning opportunities within the GSA campus. Key to the design and preparations of hybrid learning has been the principles of equal access, and equal opportunity for participation and success. This EIA has been developed as a key reference point for Academic Schools and Professional Services in the implementation of the hybrid model. Many of the actions identified will be addressed in the development and implementation strategy for hybrid learning still under consideration.

In moving to a hybrid model of delivery it is recognised that there will be differential impact to both staff and students based upon their protected characteristics, and as such these will need to be mitigated.

1. **Access to appropriate resources to engage in hybrid delivery**

In moving to a hybrid model of delivery it is recognised that staff and students may be differentially impacted by the effects of digital exclusion. Digital exclusion is defined as the "recognition that some students have less or inferior access to devices by which to engage with digital approaches to learning. This also extends to a lack of access to an internet connection with little or no bandwidth which would negatively impact the quality of their digital learning experience"[1].

Given the requirements to limit access to campus during the COVID 19 period, and therefore limit access to on campus based IT provision, there is significant risk that some students will be disadvantage in their learning experience should no action be taken. Similarly, it is recognised that some staff will have limited access to resources in order to engage in remote online teaching and learning support. Students who self-identify with specific protected characteristics may also be more negatively impacted by digital exclusion than others due to their need for specific assistive technologies and software in order to allow for remote online learning.

> **Action**: Make an assessment of appropriate resources required for staff and students to engage in hybrid delivery.

---

[1] QAA (2020) Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning, QAA, Gloucester, Available online: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/building-a-taxonomy-for-digital-learning.pdf

In addressing the needs of those effected by digital exclusion it is important that no assumptions of student need is based upon their protected characteristics. Therefore, assessment of digital exclusion will need to be undertaken at the individual level, based upon individual need and circumstances.

Needs in relation to digital exclusion is an issue for many disabled students who require support to access learning. Mechanisms for providing appropriate resources for students as a result of digital exclusion should therefore be available on the grounds of disability to students who are either awaiting DSA funding or ineligible for it (e.g. international/EU).

> **Action**: Develop appropriate mechanisms by which to identify and assess the needs of students and staff who are effected by digital exclusion, making appropriate resources available.

Additionally, assessment should be made of educational needs at the programme level ensuring essential equipment and software required to successfully achieve ILOs is communicated to students in advance of commencement of study.

> **Action**: Assessment should be made of educational needs at the programme level ensuring essential equipment and software required to successfully achieve ILOs is communicated to students. Where students are required to purchase equipment or other resources these should be communicated to students in advance of commencement of study.

There is potential inequality in access to appropriate spaces for students to engage in study remotely within their own residence as well as with Staff who may not have access to appropriate spaces to deliver online teaching or to prepare online resources.

> **Action**: Provision will be made to prioritise access to on campus spaces for students and staff who do not have appropriate spaces within their own residence to study and teach. Spaces will need to be assessed to ensure they are accessible in meeting students and staff individual needs based upon their protected characteristics. This should include consideration of accessible travel routes given potential impacts to public transport.

2. **Training and support for hybrid teaching and learning**

It is clear from existing evidence that there are differing levels of digital capabilities amongst staff and students which will impact upon their ability to teach and learn within the hybrid environment.

> **Action**: Training and support will be required to ensure staff have the appropriate digital and pedagogic capabilities to deliver hybrid learning.

> **Action**: Support for students to engage in hybrid learning will need to be built into orientation and academic induction and sustained throughout the period of hybrid delivery.

Provision of training needs to be inclusively designed and delivered; accessible to students and staff taking cognisance of their individual needs. Access and responsiveness to training may also be impacted by the effects of digital exclusion.

> **Action**: Training must be inclusively designed and provided in a variety of forms to support engagement from staff and students. Ongoing support for digital skills development must be available as required.

3. Programme Design and Delivery

Teaching and learning within the hybrid environment may have differential impacts for individuals based upon their protected characteristics. As such access to appropriate learning needs assessments must be made available remotely given limited access to campus based services.

> **Action**: Access to existing processes to assess individual needs, IRF and occupational health, will be offered remotely given limited on campus and face to face contact.

In moving programme from face to face delivery to the hybrid model an assessment of programme and course specifications should be undertaken to ensure alignment and achievement of ILOs is possible. This should include consideration of equality and diversity impacts for the diversity of students commencing and continuing to study on the programme.

In translating face to face learning activities to remote online learning, consideration will also need to be given to equality and diversity to ensure that activities do not create unanticipated barriers to participation and success.

> **Action**: Changes to programme and course specification, and the design and delivery of programmes will require equality consideration and impact assessment with approval of changes through ACG/UPC and associated actions monitored and reported through Boards and UPC throughout the period.

> **Action**: Learning resources produced for hybrid delivery will need to be designed to meet digital accessibility requirements[2].

Consultation with students and staff as part of ongoing review and monitoring activities will be key to ensuring high quality and robust delivery of hybrid curricular, particularly taking account of the experiences of students and staff with relevance to equality and diversity throughout the academic year.

> **Action**: Active consultation with staff and students should be built into implementation of the Hybrid model in order to align and respond to any identified needs and to inform evaluation activities.

Given the changing environment and Government advice and guidelines it is anticipated that not all students will be able to access campus for the commencement of teaching and that access may be limited periodically. It is also recognised that access to campus may also be differentially impacted by protected characteristics due to the requirements to shield, or limitations in international travel. This has potential to negatively impact students whose programmes would require face to face teaching on campus, or who's programme have an expectation for access to GSA based resources such as workshops, or high spec computer with specialist software.

> **Action**: Programmes will be designed and delivered in such a way that allows students to achieve all ILOs through remote online learning.

> **Action**: Where specific workshops, equipment or software is required in order to meet ILOs alternative arrangements must be identified and put in place for students engaging through remote online learning.

---

2 Guidance on digital accessibility for online resources can be found on the Engaging Students Online Canvas Site: https://canvas.gsa.ac.uk/courses/1141/pages/ensuring-accessibility

There is potential for this impact to be greater for students studying in international contexts through remote online learning given the potential for differential time zones. Additionally, students who require non-medical personal help may be more negatively impacted due to the need for clear timetabled information in order to ensure appropriate support is in place. As such clear timetables information will be required for students to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place should they be working remotely or attending campus with support.

> **Action**: Detailed timetables information must be available to all students in advance to ensure students can make appropriate arrangements to engage in their learning.

It is recognised that students may periodically be required to self-isolate and/or require medical leave due to contracting COVID19 or exhibiting COVID19 symptoms. Consideration needs to be given to the flexibility of access to teaching sessions, learning resources and the provision of asynchronous learning.

> **Action**: Provision within programme should be made to support students' continued engagement where isolating but not ill and re-engagement following a reasonable period of medical leave due to illness.

> **Action**: In order to ensure flexibility of access to taught content provision should be made for recording of taught sessions and the availability of these as standard through Canvas.

4. Academic Guidance and Support

In operating a hybrid model of delivery programme specific information and guidance as well as centrally delivered support will need to be offered remotely. Students will require clear accessible information relating to their learning, teaching and assessment as well as clear and accessible information relating to sources of support within programmes and at institutional level.

> **Action**: Information relating to learning, teaching and assessment will be made available in an accessible format within Programme and Course based Canvas sites.

> **Action**: Students will be provided a named contact person in programme for support and guidance with regular timetabled contact points throughout the semester.

> **Action**: Information relating to support services will be made available in an accessible format within appropriate Canvas/student intranet sites. Provision will be made for support to be offered remotely.

5. Academic Community

Operating within a hybrid model has the potential to negatively impact student's sense of community and participation in programme level and extracurricular activities. Some students will be further impacted due to requirements for shielding, disability related needs or limitations in international travel. As such appropriate mechanisms to support student's engagement in their programmes, community activities and extracurricular participation must be supported.

> **Action**: Development of appropriate digital spaces and resource to support students to make connections with their 'studio groups', academic communities and peers.

Action: Development of appropriate resources and tools to support online engagement in extracurricular activities.

6. **Mainstreaming inclusive learning and teaching practices**

There is potential positive impact to mainstream inclusive approaches to learning and teaching as part of the move to hybrid learning. A key focus on staff training and development in digital capacities, pedagogic design and inclusive approaches will contribute positively to GSA's equality outcomes through the provision of inclusive and accessible learning environment which anticipate the diverse needs of students. Proposals to provide appropriate resources and spaces to support student's to effectively engage in their studies, based upon their learning needs and protected characteristics, will contribute positively to GSA's equality outcomes in increasing the diversity of students studying at the GSA.

Action: Review and evaluate the move to, and delivery of, hybrid programmes in order to monitor the experience of students with a view to capitalise on the opportunities to sustain, share and develop best practice in hybrid and/remote learning and support.

2.Evidence used to make your assessment:

In developing this EIA a number of data sources were analysed in order to determine the potential impacts of GSA's move to hybrid learning. These included student and staff demographic data, available: http://www.gsa.ac.uk/about-gsa/key-information/equality/equality-monitoring/.

Data collected from a recent student survey of PGT access to digital resources and student demographic data including SIMD20, SIMD30, care experience and socioeconomic criteria as identified by POLAR categories for RUK students, was used to estimate the effects of digital exclusion.

A recent survey of staff was used to determine digital capacities and training requirements as well as estimate the impacts of digital exclusion within the staffing body.

Good practice and policy guidance was used to identify potential negative impacts as well as appropriate actions. These sources included:

Advance HE (2020) Creating Socially Distanced Campuses and Education project, Advance HE, York, online resource available: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/consultancy-and-enhancement-services/creating-socially-distanced-campuses-and-education-project#publications [Accessed 13/7/20]

Department for Education (2017) Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence, Department for Education, London, online resource available https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to-excellence.pdf [Accessed 13/07/20]

Richards, A. & Finnigan, T. (2015) Embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum: an art and design practitioner's guide, Higher Education Academy, York, online resource available: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/eedc_art_and_design_online.pdf [Accessed 13/07/20].

UK Government (2019) Accessibility and assisted digital Understanding WCAG 2.1, UK Government, London, online resource available:

https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag
[Accessed 13/07/2020]

Universities UK (2020) Principles and Considerations: Emerging from Lockdown, Universities UK, online resources available: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/principles-and-considerations-emerging-from-lockdown-june-2020.pdf [Accessed 13/07/2020]

3.Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

In moving to a hybrid model of delivery it is recognised that there will be differential impact to both staff and students based upon their protected characteristics.

Potential negative impacts requiring action are as follows:

1. **Access to appropriate resources to engage in hybrid delivery**

There is potential for negative impact to students and staff due to the effects of digital exclusion and lack of access to appropriate spaces to engage with learning and teaching remotely in personal residences.

2. **Training and support for hybrid teaching and learning**

There is potential for negative impact through lack of engagement and implementation in hybrid learning and teaching given differential digital capacities within staff and students.

3. **Programme Design and Delivery**

There is potential for negative impact on participation in hybrid learning and teaching dependent upon:

- changes to programme design, delivery and assessment not taking cognisance of the diverse needs of students.
- access to IRF and occupational health assessments and related support within the programme.
- students undertaking their studies fully online due to requirements to shield or due to limitations in international travel.
- requirements for medical leave.

4. **Academic Guidance and Support**

There is potential for negative impact on participation in hybrid learning and teaching dependent upon:

- accessibility of programme and course information relating to learning, teaching and assessment
- Accessibility of programme and institution wide structures for support and guidance

5. **Academic Community**

There is potential for negative impact on student's sense of community and extracurricular participation due to hybrid delivery and requirements for shielding or limitations in international

travel**.** Engagement online with peer groups, in order to establish belonging and relationships therefore must be supported and any barriers mitigate against to reduce feelings of isolation.

Potential positive impacts requiring action are as follows:

6. Mainstreaming inclusive learning and teaching practices

There is potential positive impact to mainstream inclusive approaches to learning and teaching as part of the move to hybrid learning. This has the potential to contribute positively to GSA equality outcomes through the provision of inclusive and accessible learning environment which anticipate the diverse needs of students and increasing the diversity of students studying at the GSA.

4.Actions you have taken or planned as a result of your findings:

See table overleaf.

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
1. Access to appropriate resources to engage in hybrid delivery			
Action: Make an assessment of appropriate resources required for staff and students to engage in hybrid delivery.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Digital Steering Group and Heads of School	July 2020
Action: Develop appropriate mechanisms by which to identify and assess the needs of students and staff who are effected by digital exclusion, making appropriate resources available.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Digital Steering Group	July 2020
Action: Assessment should be made of educational needs at the programme level ensuring essential equipment and software required to successfully achieve ILOs is communicated to students. Where students are required to purchase equipment or other resources these should be communicated to students in advance of commencement of study.	• Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Heads of School and Programme Leaders	August 2020
Action: Provision will be made to prioritise access to on campus spaces for students and staff who do not have appropriate spaces within their own residence to study and teach. Spaces will need to be assessed to ensure they are accessible in meeting students and staff individual needs based upon their protected characteristics. This should include consideration of accessible travel routes given potential impacts to public transport.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Estates / Safe Campus Group	By September 2020
2. Training and support for hybrid teaching and learning			
Action: Training and support will be required to ensure staff have the appropriate digital and pedagogic capabilities to deliver hybrid learning.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Digital Capacities Group	By September 2020

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
Action: Support for students to engage in hybrid learning will need to be built into orientation and academic induction and sustained throughout the period of hybrid delivery.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders	By September 2020
Action: Training must be inclusively designed and provided in a variety of forms to support engagement from staff and students. Ongoing support for digital skills development must be available as required.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	HR, Learning and Teaching, and Learning Technology	By September 2020
3. Programme Design and Delivery			
Action: Access to existing processes to assess individual needs, IRF and occupational health, will be offered remotely given limited on campus and face to face contact.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Head of Student Support and Head of Human Resources	By September 2020
Action: Changes to programme and course specification, and the design and delivery of programmes will require equality consideration and impact assessment with approval of changes through ACG/UPC and associated actions monitored and reported through Boards and UPC throughout the period.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Deputy Director Academic, Heads of School and Programme Leaders	July 2020
Action: Learning resources produced for hybrid delivery will need to be designed to meet digital accessibility requirements.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders and Course Tutors	By September 2020
Action: Active consultation with staff and students should be built into implementation of the Hybrid model in order to align and respond to any identified needs and to inform evaluation activities.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders	Throughout 2020/21
Action: Programmes will be designed and delivered in such a way that allows students to achieve all ILOs through remote online learning.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders	By September 2020

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
Action: Where specific workshops, equipment or software is required in order to meet ILOs alternative arrangements must be identified and put in place for students engaging through remote online learning.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders, Head of Technical Support and Head of IT	By September 2020
Action: Detailed timetables information must be available to all students in advance to ensure students can make appropriate arrangements to engage in their learning.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders	By September 2020
Action: Provision within programme should be made to support students' continued engagement where isolating but not ill, and re-engagement following a reasonable period of medical leave due to illness.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff. •	Programme Leaders	By September 2020
Action: In order to ensure flexibility of access to taught content provision should be made for recording of taught sessions and the availability of these as standard through Canvas.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Heads of Department, Programme Leaders, Head of IT and Head of Library Services	By September 2020
4. Academic Guidance and Support			
Action: Information relating to learning, teaching and assessment will be made available in an accessible format within Programme and Course based Canvas sites.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Programme Leaders	By September 2020
Action: Students will be provided a named contact person in programme for support and guidance with regular timetabled contact points throughout the semester.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff. • Foster good relations between people from different groups	Programme Leaders	By September 2020

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
Action: Information relating to support services will be made available in an accessible format within appropriate Canvas/student intranet sites. Provision will be made for support to be offered remotely.	• Advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff.	Head of Student Support, Head of Technical Support Department and Head of Library Services	By September 2020
5. Academic Community			
Action: Development of appropriate digital spaces and resource to support students to make connections with their 'studio groups', academic communities and peers.	• Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Foster good relations between people from different groups	Heads of School and Programme Leaders in partnership with GSASA	By September 2020
Action: Development of appropriate resources and tools to support online engagement in extracurricular activities.	• Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Foster good relations between people from different groups.	Heads of School and Programme Leaders in partnership with GSASA	By September 2020
6. Mainstreaming inclusive learning and teaching practices			
Action: Review and evaluate the move to, and delivery of hybrid programmes in order to monitor the experience of students with a view to capitalise on the opportunities to sustain, share and develop best practice in hybrid and/remote learning and support.	• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and meet the diverse needs of students and staff. • Foster good relations between people from different groups.	Digital Steering Group / UPC	By September 2021

5. Where/when will progress and the outcomes of your actions be reported and reviewed:

The implementation of actions arising from this EIA will be monitored by the Academic Continuity Group with regular report to Senior Leadership Group and reporting/ review through Boards of Study, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee and Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting.

6. How will your actions and intended outcomes contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

Key to the development of this proposal is the principle of equal access and equal participation for all students studying at GSA. As such this proposal will support the following equality outcomes:

Equality Outcome 2: An inclusive and accessible environment in which the diverse needs of students are systematically anticipated and provided for.

Equality Outcome 3: An increase in the number of students from currently under-represented groups and achieving successful outcomes.

Equality Outcome 5: An increased number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds contributing to learning, teaching and research at GSA and engaging with diverse local communities.

These outcomes are supported through the provision of additional resources to ensure equal access and equal participation and anticipatory actions to meet the needs of individuals regardless of their protected characteristics.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action (no potential for negative or positive impact)

Action to remove barriers/mitigate negative impact   X

Action to promote positive impact   X

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

Review Lead

Name	Mark Charters
Position	Academic Development Coordinator
Signature	Mark Charters
Date	2 September 2020

Executive Lead

Name	Paul Chapman
Position	Senior Head of School, Head of School of Simulation and Visualisation
Signature	Paul Chapman
Date	2 September 2020

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Signature	Janet Allison, Academic Registrar (on behalf of Head of Student Support and Development)
Date	2 September 2020